



MURANGA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

SPEECH BY

**PROF. DICKSON M. NYARIKI
VICE CHANCELLOR**

**3rd GRADUATION CEREMONY
MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
FRIDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2019**

- The Chancellor, Murang'a University of Technology, Prof. Justin Irina,
- The Chief Administrative Secretary/Principal Secretary for University Education and Research,
- The Governor, Murang'a County, H.E Hon. Mwangi wa Iria,
- Senator, Murang'a County, Hon. Irungu Kang'ata,
- The Women Representative, Murang'a County, Hon. Sabina Chege,
- The area Member of Parliament, Hon. Ndindi Nyoro,

- Chairman of Council, Murang'a University of Technology, Prof. Joachim Osur,
- Members of the University Council,
- Chairpersons of Councils of other Universities,
- Vice-Chancellors of other Universities,
- Principals of University Colleges,
- Members of the University Management Board and Senate,
- Staff,
- Parents, Graduands,
- Students,

- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to extend a cordial welcome to the entire congregation assembled here today for the 3rd Graduation Ceremony of Murang'a University of Technology and the launching of our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

We are indeed honoured to have you with us today to preside over this graduation celebrations as we pay tribute to the good work of the students and staff over the last four (4) years. I also

welcome our distinguished guests who have created time out of their busy schedules to join us in these celebrations.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

Our student numbers have increased significantly in the last three or so years and are expected to reach 5,500 by the end of this month. The number of students graduating this year is 618, up from 376 last year. Among these, 472 are graduating with bachelor's degrees, 128 with diplomas and 18 with certificates.

The increased number of graduands is a reflection of the University's participation in providing expanded access to

university education, as espoused in our national policies. I wish to assure you, Sir, that these graduands have been subjected to stringent quality assurance mechanisms to ensure they are well-prepared to play a productive role in our country.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

After the expiry of the duration of the previous Strategic Plan of 2013-2018, the University embarked on writing a new Strategic Plan (2019-2023), which we have launched today, to align it to Vision 2030 and the “Big Four” Agenda and integrate the relevant MTP III priority programmes, Sustainable Development Goals, and African Agenda 2063. Some of the changes in the new Strategic

Plan include recasting the Vision and Mission and making a plan that has measurable and achievable targets and result-oriented.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

The enhancement of quality in academic programmes has remained a central focus in the University. In order for this to be achieved, we have continually provided opportunities for our teaching staff to enhance their pedagogical skills and other forms of relevant training in order to sharpen their tools of trade. We have further continued to provide financial support to our

Tutorial Fellows for PhD training. In addition, we continue to implement a quality management system that was audited by the Kenya Bureau of Standards and found to be consistent with the 9001:2015 ISO Standard. This and many more efforts underscore the importance we place on the quality of our academic programmes. All-in-all, the ultimate goal is for us to prepare the best product in the form of our graduates in order to satisfy a dynamic market.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

I wish to mention that, in addition to teaching and community service, research, innovation and technology are key pillars of a modern university. Our University continues to lay emphasis on

research. Indeed, it is a requirement that academic staff attend scientific conferences to provide a forum for disseminating their research findings. They must also publish from their research in reputable journals, that are citable by international peers, This and many more efforts have contributed to enriching our repository and volume of citations, to the extent that we are now visible internationally, leading to a great improvement in the overall ranking of the University. We also encourage the academic staff to patent their innovations before they are published. It is therefore gratifying to report that so far one of our academic members has patented his innovation, and we expect more innovations to be patented in the coming years.

Our academic staff are actively involved in writing bankable research proposals, providing numerous consultancies as well as striving to keep 'ahead of the pack' in the academic arena. As an example, in addition to attracting external research grants, the staff have attracted a total of close to 80 million Kenya Shillings from the National Research Fund (NRF), one of the grants being for research infrastructure of over 46 million Shillings for the establishment of a chemistry lab.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

In this era of the requirement for universities to specialize, be creative and avoid duplication of programmes, our University lays emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

(STEM), as drivers of economic transformation in the country. As a University of technology, therefore, we aspire to provide the foundations and impetus necessary for appropriate transformations so that we can train graduates that are grounded well-enough to fit within an ever-changing work environment.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

We are all aware that there is a shortage of qualified personnel, particularly in the academic cadre, and universities are competing for the few that are available. I am, however, happy to report that our University has been able to attract a good number of qualified academic staff to take up the available positions in priority areas and meet the demands of both the existing and

proposed academic programmes. We shall, nevertheless, continue to improve on our systems so that we may attract even more well-qualified resource persons. This will continue to be rationalized in line with the student-lecturer ratio guidelines provided by the Commission for University Education.

Talking of rationalization of staff, since we are a young University, we have been careful not to fill the few establishments we have with non-essential or non-core staff. We have deliberately kept a lean staff complement of around 270, out of whom about 100 are academic (that is, teaching and technical). This makes a ratio of academic: administrative staff of about 1:1.7; which we consider healthy; but intend to improve by hiring more teaching staff as we

expand programmes and student numbers in our areas of focus and when more funds become available.

The University has also embarked on the rationalization of academic programmes. About four programmes did not attract sufficient students in the last placement by KUCCPS, mainly because those programmes require biology as a cluster subject, which subject was heavily failed. We intend not to present these programmes for student admission until the situation changes. Further, the Senate is being engaged to carry out a thorough review of all the programmes on offer and to determine which ones to drop, so as to focus only on those we must offer.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

The Ministry of Education had instructed universities to establish the Office of Career Services, after realizing that the students were not receiving adequate career guidance and orientation. The University has, therefore, established the Office of Career Services to ensure that our students receive sufficient career guidance as they transition from life in the University to life in the outside world.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the County Government of Murang'a, led by H.E. Governor Mwangi wa Iria, for continued support to this University in various ways, such as collaboration in training. We look forward to continue having

such collaborations with the County Government to ensure smooth progress. I wish also to acknowledge Prof. Mwangi wa Githumo, a retired Prof of the University of Nairobi (who hails from Murang'a), for donating to us an assorted 700 copies of his books. We greatly appreciate his gesture and invite other well-wishers to emulate this gesture.

To the graduands, let me congratulate you on your achievements and wish you success in your future endeavours. I ask of you, as the Alumni of this University, to promote the spirit of integrity and patriotism. I further call upon you to be good role models in all your undertakings for the sake of your alma mater.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the various players who have provided unfailing support to your studies and contributed to your success; in particular your parents, guardians, benefactors, staff, and the Government.

Thank you and God bless.

P/S: I NOW CALL UPON THE CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL TO COME AND MAKE HIS REMARKS